



JOHN WILSON  
WINE

## Jolly wine

Beaujolais Nouveau is on its way – and it could be worth stocking up for forthcoming festive parties

**F**ROM NEXT THURSDAY, you will see bottles of Beaujolais Nouveau make their annual appearance on the shelves of our supermarkets and wine shops. These days, however, it is available only in a few retailers: Dunnes Stores and Tesco have decided not to stock Beaujolais Nouveau this year, although SuperValu/Centra, O'Briens and Superquinn will.

Times have certainly changed from the 1970s and early 1980s, when the first new wine of the year was celebrated with great fanfare everywhere. It was fashionable to have Beaujolais parties, and restaurants hired drummers and trumpeters to herald its arrival.

Beaujolais Nouveau was one of those brilliant marketing inventions. Normally a winemaker must wait for anything from six to 18 months before bottling and selling his wine. Nouveau is made by a version of carbonic maceration, or whole-berry fermentation, under pressure, which can produce an ebulliently fruity wine with no tannins, in a very short period. A winemaker did not have to age his wine for months – sometimes years – in barrel, before selling and receiving payment for his produce. For years, it provided growers in the Beaujolais region with a cash windfall every November.

The problem was that most Nouveau was, and is, barely drinkable. Much of it tastes horribly confectioned, often with a distinct aroma and flavour of bubblegum.

In this country, Beaujolais Nouveau day holds sad memories for many in both the media and wine trade. On November 13th, 1984, eight Irishmen – a wine importer, four journalists, several restaurateurs and the pilot – lost their lives when a chartered aircraft, taking part in a race to bring home the first Beaujolais Nouveau, crashed off the south coast of England. Not surprisingly, it has cast a shadow over what was once a merry occasion in this country.

I really like the idea of celebrating the new vintage with a draft of the just-made wine. Young wine is a wonderful elemental throwback to the very first wine, made when somebody left grape juice hanging around for too long, and it began to ferment. I love young wines, and

traditionally-made young Beaujolais in particular.

If you are planning to have a party this Christmas, with a few nibbles thrown in, there are few red wines that fit the bill as well as Beaujolais, or the posher Beaujolais Villages, from more select sites. Both should offer a lovely easy-drinking, fruit-filled glass of wine with no hard tannins on the finish.

So this year I may try out a glass of Nouveau (the most widely available appears to be that of Georges Duboeuf, which should be good, and will sell for around €12). However, I will also stock my cellar with a few bottles of proper Beaujolais and Beaujolais Villages for the coming festive season.

### WINES OF THE WEEK

**Beaujolais 2007 Georges Duboeuf, 12%, €11.99** Nice light, juicy nose; very attractive light wine with a lovely strawberry edge and good, but not overdone acidity.

**Stockists:** Super Valu/Centra; Kelly's, Vernon Ave, Clontarf; ADM Londis, Yellow Walls; Martin's, Fairview; Spar, Milltown and Leeson Street; Jus de Vine, Portmarnock (all in Dublin); D Mac's; Next Door, Raheen and Chawke's (all in Limerick); McPhail's, Egan's, and Callan's, (all in Drogheda); Knight's, Shannon; Harvest, Oranmore; Salthill Liquor Store; McCambridge's (both in Galway).

**Beaujolais L'Ancien 2008 Les Terres Dorées, 12.00%, €14.40** This is one of the few producers who does not use carbonic maceration on his wines. Although an innovator in many ways, Jean-Paul Brun prefers to make his wine by traditional fermentation, often to the displeasure of the authorities. He also makes a superb Beaujolais Blanc, well worth ordering alongside the red. This wine has lovely juicy plum and black fruits, good acidity, and a lovely easy finish. **Stockist:** Wines Direct ([www.winesdirect.ie](http://www.winesdirect.ie), 1890-579579)

**Beaujolais Villages 2007 Tentation Jean-Claude Lapalu, 11.5%, €17.45** Another of the great innovators in Beaujolais, an area that badly needs fresh thinking, Jean-Claude Lapalu makes some of the most beautiful, serene Brouilly, as well as this delicious wine. Juicy, light and very gluggable, easy brambly fruits, with very good length. We drank it lightly chilled, with scallops followed by a leek risotto; both worked really well. **Stockists:** The Wicklow Wine Co; McHugh's, Kilbarrack and Artane, and Red Island Wine, Skerries; Jus de Vine, Portmarnock and Redmond's, Ranelagh (all Dublin); Probus Wines, Oughterard.

**Beaujolais Villages Domaine Cologne 2008, €9, 13%** Reduced to an amazing price until Christmas, this is worth buying in quantity for the coming season. Light and fruity with a refreshing bite, it's perfect for parties and

everyday drinking with cheese dishes as well as lighter meats. **Stockist:** Superquinn  
jwilson@irishtimes.com

**'Beaujolais should not be a civilised society lady; it is the one night stand of wines'**

Kermit Lynch, 'Adventures on the Wine Route'

**TWO UNDER €12**

**Domaine Duffour, Vin de pays des Côtes de Gascogne 2008, 11.5%, €8.99** A very ripe aromatic Sauvignon-like nose with a touch of gooseberries; zippy ripe rounded green fruits, but not sweet. A lovely, light, easy-drinking lemony **wine** with plenty of fruit. Perfect for parties and everyday succour.

**Stockist: O'Briens.**

**Ramos Loios 2008, Portugal, 14%, €9.99** A deceptive **wine** - the lively fresh dark cherry fruits can obscure a heart-warming 14% alcohol. Perfect easy drinking **wine** from one of Portugal's leading **wine** producers, better with food, but certainly approachable without.

**Stockist: O'Briens**

